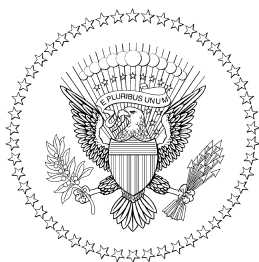


Weekly Compilation of
**Presidential
Documents**



Monday, June 9, 2008
Volume 44—Number 22
Pages 769–798

Contents

Addresses and Remarks

See also Meetings With Foreign Leaders
Congressional Medal of Honor, posthumous
presentation to Private First Class Ross A.
McGinnis—776
Congressional picnic—791
Earthquake relief efforts in China, remarks
following meeting—792
Ford's Theatre gala—776
Housing and Urban Development
Department, swearing-in ceremony for
Secretary Preston—792
National economy, meeting—778
NCAA men's basketball champion University
of Kansas Jayhawks—780
Radio address—771
South Carolina, commencement address at
Furman University in Greenville—772
U.S. Institute of Peace, remarks at
groundbreaking ceremony—783

Communications to Congress

Belarus, message on continuation of national
emergency with respect to the actions and
policies of certain members of the
Government of Belarus and other persons
undermining democratic processes or
institutions—795
Bulgaria-U.S. Taxation Convention, message
transmitting—783

Communications to Federal Agencies

Suspension of Limitations Under the
Jerusalem Embassy Act, memorandum—
782

Directives

Biometrics for Identification and Screening
To Enhance National Security—788

Meetings With Foreign Leaders

Israel, Prime Minister Olmert—782
Netherlands, Prime Minister Balkenende—
787

(Continued on the back of the inside cover.)

Editor's Note: The President was at Camp David, MD, on June 6, the closing date of this issue. Releases and announcements issued by the Office of the Press Secretary but not received in time for inclusion in this issue will be printed next week.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

Published every Monday by the Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC 20408, the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* contains statements, messages, and other Presidential materials released by the White House during the preceding week.

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Contents—Continued

Notices

Continuation of the National Emergency With
Respect to the Actions and Policies of
Certain Members of the Government of
Belarus and Other Persons Undermining
Democratic Processes or Institutions in
Belarus—795

Proclamations

Black Music Month—770
Flag Day and National Flag Week—794
Great Outdoors Month—769
Italian Independence Day—775
National Child's Day—769
National Oceans Month—780

Statements by the President

Steven C. Preston as Secretary of the
Department of Housing and Urban
Development, Senate confirmation—788
Zimbabwe situation—779

Supplementary Materials

Acts approved by the President—798
Checklist of White House press releases—797
Digest of other White House
announcements—796
Nominations submitted to the Senate—797

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Week Ending Friday, June 6, 2008

Proclamation 8265—Great Outdoors Month, 2008

May 30, 2008

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

From the Appalachian Mountains to the Grand Canyon, America is blessed with places of natural beauty where our citizens can discover the full splendor of this great Nation. During Great Outdoors Month, our Nation celebrates the grandeur of our open spaces, strengthens our commitment to preserving this heritage, and reaffirms our dedication to protecting our air, water, and lands.

My Administration remains dedicated to wise stewardship of the environment, and we will continue to protect our Nation's natural wonders. This past year, we have made great strides in helping wildlife thrive and in restoring habitat for migratory birds through cooperative conservation. Working with State and tribal officials, we are preserving important wildlife habitats and expanding the National Wildlife Refuge system. Citizens can visit takepride.gov to learn more about opportunities to care for our environment.

Great Outdoors Month is an opportunity to honor those who work to keep our natural places beautiful and to celebrate some of our country's favorite outdoor pastimes. These activities encourage a healthy lifestyle and give Americans pride in the great American landscape. As responsible stewards of our natural resources, we can help ensure that the great outdoors will be available for enjoyment by generations to come.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim June 2008 as Great Outdoors Month. I call on all Americans to observe this month with appropriate

programs and activities, and to take time to visit and enjoy the great outdoors.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this thirtieth day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-second.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:59 a.m., June 3, 2008]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on June 4. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Proclamation 8267—National Child's Day, 2008

May 30, 2008

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

America has a duty to provide its children with the support and skills they need to become the next generation of responsible leaders. On National Child's Day, we underscore the importance of fostering the love, encouragement, and protection that empowers our children to become happy and successful adults.

Children are a precious gift who need the love and support of family and friends to lead lives rich in promise and fulfillment. Parents are the most vital part of a child's life, providing them with the guidance and discipline to make the right choices and understand the consequences of their actions. Family, teachers, and others inspire our youth to use their talents and to become confident and caring adults. Religious and community leaders also have a role in teaching values and encouraging children to love their neighbors just as they would like to be loved themselves.

Together, we can all help our children be prepared to meet life's challenges and realize the great promise of our country.

My Administration continues to support programs that help prepare America's youth for the opportunities ahead. The No Child Left Behind Act requires that every child have access to a quality education. We have made significant progress toward that goal across the country, with students achieving record math and reading scores. The America COMPETES Act, which was built upon my American Competitiveness Initiative, helped strengthen our goal of staying competitive within the global economy. The Helping America's Youth initiative, led by First Lady Laura Bush, encourages adults to work to help our young people reach their full potential.

On National Child's Day and throughout the year, we honor the boys and girls of America and show our gratitude to those who work to support them. This day is a reminder to us all that our commitment to children helps make our country a better place.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim June 1, 2008, as National Child's Day. I call upon all our citizens to celebrate National Child's Day with appropriate ceremonies and activities. I also urge all Americans to dedicate time and energy to educating our youth and providing them with a safe and caring environment.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this thirtieth day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-second.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:59 a.m., June 3, 2008]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on June 4. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Proclamation 8264—Black Music Month, 2008

May 30, 2008

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

America's diverse musical heritage exemplifies the creativity and optimism of our Nation. During Black Music Month, we celebrate the extraordinary talents and creativity of African-American singers, musicians, and composers whose achievements have enriched our culture and enhanced our lives.

For generations, African-American artists have created music that communicates across racial boundaries and expresses both joy and sorrow. When facing the cruelty of slavery and injustice, African Americans lifted spirituals to the heavens, bringing comfort to troubled souls. These timeless declarations of hope and faith evolved into the more modern genres of gospel, blues, ragtime, and jazz, and they are given voice in the musical genius of Scott Joplin, Marian Anderson, Eubie Blake, and Mahalia Jackson. During the Civil Rights era, African-American musicians such as Duke Ellington, Muddy Waters, and Ruth Brown conveyed the struggles of their communities while bringing people of all backgrounds together. Today, this music continues to inspire America's citizens and advance its creative spirit.

Throughout the course of American history, black musicians have used their great talents to share the richness of the African-American experience and to develop a uniquely American style of music enjoyed throughout the world. This month, we honor the pioneers of African-American music and today's contemporary artists who have enriched the lives of people everywhere.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim June 2008 as Black Music Month. I encourage all Americans to learn more about the history of black music and to enjoy the great contributions of African-American singers, musicians, and composers.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this thirtieth day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-second.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:59 a.m., June 3, 2008]

NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 31, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on June 4.

The President's Radio Address

May 31, 2008

Good morning. Next week, Congress will return to Washington after its Memorial Day recess. I hope Members of Congress return rested, because they have a lot of work left on important issues and limited time to get it done.

Congress needs to pass a responsible war funding bill that puts the needs of our troops first, without loading it up with unrelated domestic spending. Our troops in Afghanistan are performing with courage and honor, delivering blows to the Taliban and Al Qaida. Our troops in Iraq have driven Al Qaida and other extremists from sanctuaries they once held across the country and are chasing them from their last remaining strongholds. Our men and women in uniform are risking their lives every day, and they deserve the resources and flexibility they need to complete their mission.

Congress needs to support our military families by passing an expansion of the GI bill that makes it easier for our troops to transfer unused education benefits to their spouses and children. It is critical for this legislation to support the All-Volunteer Force and help us recruit and retain the best military in the world.

Congress needs to ensure that our intelligence professionals have the tools to monitor terrorist communications quickly and effectively. Last year, Congress passed temporary legislation that provided these tools. Unfortunately, the law expired more than 3 months ago. Congress needs to pass long-term legislation that will help our intelligence

professionals learn our enemies' plans before they can attack and put an end to abusive lawsuits filed against companies believed to have assisted the Government after the attacks of September the 11th. And Congress needs to act soon so we can maintain a vital flow of intelligence.

Congress needs to approve the Colombia free trade agreement so we can open a growing market for American goods, services, and crops. Unfortunately, the House of Representatives is blocking a vote on this vital agreement. Unless this agreement is brought up for a vote, it will die. This will hurt American workers, farmers, and businessowners, and it will hurt our Nation's strategic interests in a vital region of the world.

Congress needs to confirm the good men and women who have been nominated to important Government positions. There are now more than 350 nominations pending before the Senate. These include highly qualified people I have nominated to fill vacancies on the Federal bench. And they include talented nominees who are needed to help guide our economy during a time of uncertainty. For example, three nominees to the Federal Reserve have been waiting for confirmation for more than a year. And because of Senate inaction, the Council of Economic Advisers is now down to a single member. This confirmation backlog makes it harder for Government to meet its responsibilities, and the United States Senate needs to give every nominee an up-or-down vote as soon as possible.

One nominee who needs to be confirmed right away is Steve Preston. A month has passed since I nominated Steve to be the next Secretary of Housing and Urban Development. Unfortunately, Senators have stalled this nomination over an issue that has nothing to do with Steve or his qualifications for the job. With all the turbulence in the housing market, this is no time to play politics with such a critical appointment. So I call on the Senate to give Steve Preston a prompt vote and confirm this good man without further delay.

At a time when many Americans are concerned about keeping their homes, Congress needs to pass legislation to modernize the Federal Housing Administration, reform

Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac to ensure they focus on their housing mission, and allow State housing agencies to issue tax-free bonds to refinance subprime loans.

And at a time when Americans are concerned about rising gas prices, Congress needs to pass legislation to expand domestic energy production.

In all these areas, Congress has failed to act. The American people deserve better from their elected leaders. Congress needs to show the American people that Republicans and Democrats can compete for votes and cooperate for results at the same time. You sent your representatives to Washington to do the people's business. And you have a right to expect them to do it, even in an election year.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 11 a.m. on May 30 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on May 31. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 30 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Commencement Address at Furman University in Greenville, South Carolina

May 31, 2008

Thank you. Thank you very much. Mr. President—President Shi, thank you for that kind introduction. Governor Sanford, Senator Graham, Congressman Inglis, members of the board of trustees, faculty, staff, members of the Furman community, parents, and most important, the class of 2008: Thank you for this kind invitation to be with you.

I congratulate the parents here who have sacrificed to make this day possible. When your child graduates from college, it is a glorious day for your family and a pretty good day for your bank account. *[Laughter]* I know the graduates will join me in thanking you for your love and support.

And I thank the members of the Furman faculty. I appreciate your devoting your career to improving the lives of young people. I know this is an institution where folks are

encouraged to make their voices heard. I too am a strong believer in free speech. And to prove it, I'm about to give you one. *[Laughter]*

For 4 years, this campus has been your life. You've studied hard, and I suspect some of you may have played hard. *[Laughter]* Along the way, some of you may have wondered whether this day would ever come. Well, it's finally here, and Laura and I send our heartfelt congratulations to the class of 2008.

I'm glad to be joined with my friend and outstanding leader of South Carolina, Governor Mark Sanford, class of 1983. Governor, I'm not going to ask if you ever got caught swimming in the fountains. *[Laughter]*

As the president said, 25 years ago, the Governor sat where you now sit, as a member of the graduating class. As it happens, as he mentioned, the commencement speaker that day was my dad. Now, that means some at Furman will have heard graduation speeches from two generations of Bushes. It's a great step forward for the Bush family and a great step backward for your English department. *[Laughter]*

And as the president mentioned, I have other family ties with Furman. In the early 1930s, a student named Willa Martin graduated from the women's college that was soon to become part of Furman. She went on to marry my mother's father. She also spent time as a columnist for the Associated Press, thus beginning the long history of warm relations between the Bush family and the media. *[Laughter]*

My administration also has another Furman connection. One of the first people I see almost every morning is a Furman grad and my Director of National Intelligence, Admiral Mike McConnell, class of 1966. I asked Mike if he ever took part in the "midnight serenade." He said, I'd like to tell you, but the information is classified. *[Laughter]*

It's a special time of your life. It's—you're going to find it's a time when you get a lot of free advice—some of it helpful, some of it not—like that one graduation speaker who urged the students to keep their ears to the ground, their shoulders to the wheel, and their noses to the grindstone. All I could

think was, that's a hell of a position to be in. *[Laughter]*

I also remember what it was like to graduate from college and look out at the world before me. At the time, I must confess, the last thing on my mind was how to be a model citizen. Just ask my mother. *[Laughter]* Yet I found, as you will, the world has a way of helping you to grow. Soon many of you will be earning a living and getting married and raising families. As you move ahead in life, you will find temptations and distractions that can take you off course. You might also find that years may pass before you learn some important truths: That who you are is more important than what you have; and that you have responsibilities to your fellow citizens, your country, your family, and yourself.

In my first speech as the Governor of Texas, I talked about the importance of a responsibility society. In my last commencement address as President, it seems a fitting subject to return to.

I'm heartened today to see that our country is seeing a resurgence of personal responsibility. I'm pleased that this resurgence is being led by many young people who are embracing bedrock values of faith and family. These are values on which Furman and many other great universities were founded. And as you leave this campus today, my call to you is this: Strengthen this rising culture of responsibility in America by serving others, contributing to our civic life, and being accountable to yourself and your families.

A culture of responsibility does mean serving others. Through the toil of generations and the grace of an Almighty, our Nation has been given a lot. And more and more Americans are recognizing our obligations to help those who have little.

One of the most uplifting trends in our country is that volunteerism is at near alltime highs. And we see this spirit here at Furman. I was impressed when I heard that nearly two-thirds of you balanced your studies this year with outreach to your community. You helped children with disabilities realize they have a place in our communities and in our hearts. You helped Habitat for Humanity give people a home of their own. Through such works of compassion, you've learned early in life that nothing is more fulfilling

than putting the needs of others ahead of your own. And I thank you for what you've done for this community and for our country.

I saw the spirit of service in Greensburg, Kansas, which was destroyed by a tornado last year. In the aftermath, a Greensburg resident simply said, "My town is gone." And it was. But after the storm receded, a wave of compassion arrived. First, family members rushed in with aid. Then folks came from nearby towns doing their duties to help their neighbors in need. And soon citizens across our country rallied to help the people of Greensburg. I recently went to Greensburg High School to deliver their commencement address, and I'm pleased to report to you, the town of Greensburg is recovering, and the spirit of determination and compassion is alive and well in America's heartland.

I've seen the spirit of service in good Americans who work to heal troubled communities across our country. Much of this good work is carried out by community and faith-based groups who lift up struggling souls one at a time. They serve in soup kitchens and help former prisoners rejoin society, inspire young people in inner-city classrooms, ensuring they have the skills they need to live lives of hope and opportunity.

I've seen the spirit of service in Americans who are changing lives on the continent of Africa. Our citizens are teaching children in Ghana, helping villagers fight malaria and HIV/AIDS in Tanzania, and helping war-ravaged people recover and rebuild in Liberia. These citizens are showing the world the true face of our country, a kind and generous nation that is meeting its responsibility to help the poor and the sick and the hungry.

I've seen the spirit of service in those who proudly wear the uniform. America is blessed to have citizens who volunteer in times of danger, and that includes some of you here today. You will leave Furman with more than a degree—*[applause]*—you'll leave this fine university with more than a degree; you will also receive your commission as an officer in the United States military. I thank you for making the noble decision to serve. Your country's proud of you, and so is your Commander in Chief.

To all of you, my call is to make service to others a way of life. Wherever you live,

whatever you do, find a way to give back to your communities. And however you choose to serve, you're going to learn a great lesson: That the more you give, the more you'll benefit.

A culture of responsibility means contributing to our civic life. I ask you to be citizens, not spectators, and help to build a nation of virtue and character. You could strengthen our country by participating in the democratic process. In recent years, we've seen millions of people in places like Afghanistan, Iraq, and Georgia and Ukraine risk their lives for the right to cast a ballot. These courageous people should inspire us to take our votes just as seriously. I know the democratic spirit is alive in our country because there was a big vote recently. The new American Idol got about 55 million votes. *[Laughter]* I hope we see even a bigger turnout this November. For some of you, this will be your first Presidential election. I ask you to get involved in the process and do your duty and vote. By the way, if you're wondering who to vote for, the Governor and I would be happy to offer a few suggestions. *[Laughter]*

You can strengthen our country by showing fiscal discipline in your lives. It may sound funny coming from a visitor from Washington, DC, but it's important to your futures and to the future of our country. Many of you have debts from student loans. It's an investment that I expect you will find worthwhile. In the next few years, you may find it tempting to amass more debt, particularly from credit cards, on expenses that bring little long-term benefit. My advice to you is to—not to dig a financial hole that you can't get out of. Live within your means, and bear in mind that there are no shortcuts to the American Dream.

Your Furman degree will open the door to a wide variety of career options. One of the most noble paths you can take is a career in public service. I know you probably look at the debates in Washington and in the political campaigns and conclude that public service isn't worth it. That's a mistake. I've had my fair share of critics, but no criticism can overcome the satisfaction of serving your fellow citizens and pursuing great goals for our Nation. If you choose a career in public service, maintain the highest ethical standards,

bring honor to whatever position you hold, and always put the people you serve ahead of yourself.

But public service is not just politics. It can include social work and teaching and careers in the nonprofit sector. There are countless organizations across our country that devote themselves to improving the lives of others, such as the American Red Cross or Teach for America or the Boys and Girls Clubs. These groups fulfill a noble mission, and they're a vital part of the responsibility society.

Others of you will make your careers in the private sector. If you choose this path, take pride in what you do and work hard and bring value to the enterprise you work for. And remember this: Our country needs corporate responsibility as well as personal responsibility. So if you enter the business world, be honest with your shareholders, be truthful to your consumers, and give back to the communities in which you live. And all of us have a responsibility to be good stewards of the environment.

Finally, a culture of responsibility means being accountable to your families and to yourself. I found family to be a source of great comfort and strength. When people talk about my family, they often say I inherited my dad's eyes and my mother's mouth. *[Laughter]* But I got far more from them than that. From my dad, I learned that a gentle soul can also be strong. From my mother, I saw the blessings of humor and honesty and unqualified love. And from the two of them, I got an inspiring example of how a strong marriage can carry you through any challenge. And what has carried me through the challenges in my life have been the love and support of a wonderful woman named Laura Bush.

My wish is that you find a partner in life who loves you and challenges you and comforts you and gives your life meaning. And if you have the blessings of becoming a parent, I would like for you to remember that the most important job you will ever have is to love your child with all your heart.

In life, there's going to be many temptations to distract you from your responsibilities. Popular culture can give you the impression that alcohol, drugs, or promiscuity

can lead to fulfillment in life. It's an illusion, and I urge you to reject it.

If you do fall short, know that it is never too late to recover and get back on the right track. There was a time in my life when alcohol competed for my affections, but I found salvation in my family and my faith. There's no shame in recognizing your failings or getting help if you need it. The tragedy comes when we fail to take responsibility for our weaknesses and surrender to them.

And finally, you probably don't realize it, but you're role models for others in your life, whether it's a little brother or sister who looks up to you or someone else who admires you. Positive role models are greatly needed in this society. And I urge you to set a hopeful example by leading lives of character and integrity. And if you do, you'll be proud of who you are; you'll teach others around you that a life of responsibility leads to a life of fulfillment.

In all these ways, your generation has an opportunity to show how timeless values can be applied in a modern world. And as you do so, history offers noble examples to follow, including many from right here in South Carolina. From this State came a signer of the Declaration of Independence who lost his fortune fighting for our freedom but never regretted the fight. From this State came the brave colonel who drew a line in the sand against oppressive rule at the old Spanish mission called the Alamo. And from this State came the child of slaves who was among the first black women to be an adviser to Presidents.

And from this State came a young man who went off to serve his country in World War II. His last name was Smith, and it happens his first name was Furman. Private Furman Smith—he never attended this school, but he grew up right down the road. While on duty in Italy, Private Smith's unit came under heavy fire. He fended off 80 enemy soldiers to defend his wounded buddies. He died at the age of 19, with his rifle still clutched in his hand. For the acts of courage and character that cost him his life, Furman Smith was awarded the Medal of Honor. Sixty-four years ago this very day, that young man carried the Furman name into

history. And now, in a very different way, so will each of you.

May the values you learned here always guide your course. May you always make the right choices. And may you always look in the mirror and be proud of what you see.

Congratulations. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:09 p.m. at Paladin Stadium. In his remarks, he referred to David E. Shi, president, Furman University.

Proclamation 8266—Italian Independence Day, 2008 *May 30, 2008*

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

On Italian Independence Day, we recognize our friendship with the nation of Italy, and we celebrate the generations of Italian Americans who have made significant contributions to our national character.

June 2, 1946, marks the birth of the Italian Republic, the long-awaited triumph of liberty and democracy in an ancient land. Today, Italy is a friend of the United States and an ally of freedom and peace. Italians and Americans join together on Italian Independence Day to commemorate Italy's independence and celebrate its rich history.

The people of our two countries share special ties rooted in history, friendship, and family. Millions of American citizens have Italian ancestry, and they and their forebears have helped shape our way of life. Americans are grateful for the many contributions Italians and Italian Americans have made to our history and our culture, and we are proud that our nations are allies in the cause of peace and security around the world.

In celebrating Italian Independence Day, we commemorate the freedoms our countries hold dear, and we honor the generations of Italian Americans who came to our shores seeking opportunity. They have helped to shape our great Nation and influenced American life for the better.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by

the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim June 2, 2008, as Italian Independence Day. I call upon all Americans to observe this day by celebrating the contributions of Italians and Italian Americans to our Nation.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this thirtieth day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-second.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:59 a.m., June 3, 2008]

NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 2, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on June 4.

Remarks at the Ford's Theatre Gala

June 1, 2008

Thank you all. Hal, thanks for the introduction. And I want to thank you all for supporting Ford's Theatre. Laura and I have been coming here now for 8 years to the Ford's Theatre gala, and this is by far the best.

We want to thank our choir and our orchestra and all the fabulous performers for taking time out of your busy schedules to help—to support this really important part of Washington. And Gatlin is probably saying, of course, I said that for the crowd last year. [*Laughter*] But, no, it really was fantastic. And it's such an uplifting performance and a reminder of what a great President Abraham Lincoln was.

I do want to thank Paul Tetreault for being a really fabulous director of the Ford's Theatre. And I want to thank the gala cochair and all the people who support the Ford's Theatre. I know you're excited about the opening of the renovated Ford's Theatre in February 2009. Laura and I are excited too. Just send the pictures down to Crawford. [*Laughter*]

Thanks for a fabulous evening, and God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7 p.m. at the National Theatre. In his remarks, he referred to actor

Hal Holbrook; musician Larry Gatlin; and Paul R. Tetreault, producing director, Ford's Theatre. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 2.

Remarks on Presenting Posthumously the Congressional Medal of Honor to Private First Class Ross A. McGinnis

June 2, 2008

Good morning. Welcome to the White House. A week ago, on Memorial Day, the flag of the United States flew in halfstaff in tribute to those who fell in service to our country. Today we pay special homage to one of those heroes: Private First Class Ross Andrew McGinnis of the United States Army. Private McGinnis died in a combat zone in Iraq on December the 4th, 2006, and for his heroism that day, he now receives the Medal of Honor.

In a few moments, the Military Aide will read the citation, and the Medal will be accepted by Ross's mom and dad, Romyne and Tom. It's a privilege to have with us as well, Becky and Katie, Ross's sisters.

I also want to thank the other distinguished guests who have joined us: Mr. Vice President; Secretary Jim Peake of Veterans Affairs; Secretary Pete Geren of the Army; Secretary Michael Wynne of the Air Force; General Jim "Hoss" Cartwright, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. I appreciate other members of the administration for joining us.

I want to thank Members of the United States Congress who have joined us today: Steve Buyer, John Peterson, Louie Gohmert. Thank you all for coming. I appreciate the chaplain for the prayer. We welcome friends and family members of Ross, as well as members of the 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry, including Charlie Company, that's with us today.

We're also joined by Private McGinnis's vehicle crew, the very men who witnessed his incredible bravery. We welcome Sergeant First Class Cedric Thomas, Staff Sergeant Ian Newland, Sergeant Lyle Buehler, and Specialist Sean Lawson.

A special welcome to the prior recipients of the Medal of Honor, whose presence here is—means a lot to the McGinnis family. Thank you for coming.

The Medal of Honor is the Nation's highest military distinction. It's given for valor beyond anything that duty could require or a superior could command. By long tradition, it's presented by the President. For any President, doing so is a high privilege.

Before he entered our country's history, Ross McGinnis came of age in the town of Knox, Pennsylvania. Back home, they remember a slender boy with a big heart and a carefree spirit. He was a regular guy. He loved playing basketball. He loved working on cars—cars. He wasn't too wild about schoolwork. *[Laughter]* He had a lot of friends and a great sense of humor. In high school and in the Army, Ross became known for his ability to do impersonations. A buddy from boot camp said that Ross was the only man there who could make the drill sergeant laugh. *[Laughter]*

Most of all, those who knew Ross McGinnis recall him as a dependable friend and a really good guy. If Ross was your buddy and you needed help to—or you got in trouble, he'd stick with you and be the one you could count on. One of his friends told a reporter that Ross was the type who would do anything for anybody.

That element of his character was to make all the difference when Ross McGinnis became a soldier in the Army. One afternoon 18 months ago, Private McGinnis was part of a Humvee patrol in a neighborhood of Baghdad. From his position in the gun turret, he noticed a grenade thrown directly at his vehicle. In an instant, the grenade dropped through the gunner's hatch. He shouted a warning to the four men inside. Confined in that tiny space, the soldiers had no chance of escaping the explosion. Private McGinnis could have easily jumped from the Humvee and saved himself. Instead, he dropped inside, put himself against the grenade, and absorbed the blast with his own body.

By that split second decision, Private McGinnis lost his own life, and he saved his comrades. One of them was Platoon Sergeant Cedric Thomas, who said this: "He had time to jump out of the truck. He chose not to.

He's a hero. He was just an awesome guy." For his actions, Private McGinnis received the Silver Star, a posthumous promotion in rank, and a swift nomination for the Medal of Honor. But it wasn't acclaim or credit that motivated him. Ross's dad has said: "I know medals never crossed his mind. He was always about friendships and relationships. He just took that to the ultimate this time."

When Ross McGinnis was in kindergarten, the teacher asked him to draw a picture of what he wanted to be when he grew up. He drew a soldier. Today our Nation recognizing—recognizes him as a soldier and more than that because he did far more than his duty. In the words of one of our commanding generals, "Four men are alive because this soldier embodied our Army values and gave his life."

The day will come when the mission he served has been completed and the fighting's over and freedom and security have prevailed. America will never forget those who came forward to bear the battle. America will always honor the name of this brave soldier who gave all for his country and was taken to rest at age 19.

No one outside this man's family can know the true weight of their loss. But in words spoken long ago, we are told how to measure the kind of devotion that Ross McGinnis showed on his last day: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

Gospel also gives this assurance: "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." May the deep respect of our whole Nation be a comfort to the family of this fallen soldier. May God always watch over the country he served and keep us ever grateful for the life of Ross Andrew McGinnis.

And now I'd like to invite Mr. and Mrs. McGinnis to please come forward for the presentation, and the Military Aide will read the citation for the Medal of Honor.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:50 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Maj. Gen. Douglas L. Carver, USA, Chief of Army Chaplains. Following the President's remarks, Lt. Cmdr. Daniel Walsh, USCG, Coast Guard Aide to the President, read the citation.

Remarks During a Meeting on the National Economy

June 2, 2008

The President. Thank you all for coming. I want to thank Dr. Lindsey and Bob Carroll and John and Marty. Thank you all for talking about the benefits and wisdom of keeping taxes low. I do want to remind people what life was like in the years 2001 and 2003. The country was having some pretty tough economic times in 2001. Larry, you might remember that period.

Lawrence B. Lindsey. I do—painfully.

The President. Yes, we had a period of—we had a couple of meetings in Austin, Texas, prior to me getting sworn in as the President, and people from industry were saying, “You’re going to inherit a really tough period.” I mean, the—clearly the economy was slowing, and so we had to strategize on how to deal with it.

And Larry and others in—agreed that the best way to deal with economic uncertainty is to let people have more of their own money. Because we believe that the economy benefits when there’s more money in circulation, in the hands of the people who actually earned it. I know that’s probably not as sophisticated a concept as some of you all up here have articulated, but it’s a concept that worked.

And then when you couple the economic slowdown with an attack on our Nation and our firm response to that attack, it created more economic uncertainty. And that’s why the tax cuts of 2001 and 2003 were necessary. And the facts are that we had 52 months of uninterrupted job growth, the longest in the history of the United States.

And I know you believe, and I firmly believe, that those tax cuts were part of that engine for that economic vitality. And the economy is not doing as well as we’d like to do—like it to do today. But there’s no question that the tax cuts provided economic vitality.

And the—and now the question is, what will the Congress do? Given the facts that tax cuts have worked, what will be the congressional response? Our response is, let’s make those tax cuts permanent. Let’s make sure that there is certainty during uncertain

times in our economy. Imagine if you’re trying to plan—plan your life, plan the future for your small business—and you don’t know whether or not Congress is going to keep your taxes low. It makes your environment more uncertain.

You hear a lot of talk out of Congress about, you know, the economic slowdown. And we understand there’s an economic slowdown, and we’re concerned about the economic slowdown. But one of the things that they can do to help make sure that this economy is a—recovers like we believe it will is to cut—make the tax cuts permanent.

Now, our fellow citizens have got to understand that those tax cuts aren’t permanent. In other words, if Congress allows them to expire, here are the consequences. Now, first of all, taxes go up by an average of \$280 billion a year. And I promise you, there’s going to be a \$280 billion expansion of government to couple that—those tax increases. And the fundamental question is, who would you rather have spending your money, you or the Congress? I would strongly suggest the answer is you. [*Laughter*]

A family of four with \$50,000 in income will pay \$2,155 more in taxes. That may not sound like a lot to folks who are throwing around a lot of big numbers in Washington. It means a lot if you’re trying to save for your family. It means a lot if you’re worried about gasoline prices. It means a lot if you’re a hard-working American family. That’s a lot of money.

If you’re a family of four with a \$60,000 income, you’ll pay \$1,900 more in taxes. Overall, 43 million families with children will face a tax increase of \$2,323 on average.

Our philosophy is, not only does the economy benefit when taxes are low, we believe American families benefit when they have more money to spend. And it’s that collective wisdom of individual Americans that really define the course for our country. And there really is, kind of, talks about the philosophical divide we face. Who is more wise, the Congress or the individual? We trust the individual. We trust that individual to make the proper decisions for their family.

Now, people say, there’s got to be basic services out of government. Absolutely. But we got plenty of money in Washington. What

we need is more priority. People got to set the priorities. Government can't try to be all things to all people. Government has got to also understand that when someone's working hard, the more money they have in their pocket, the better off the country is.

I want to talk about small businesses. Seventy percent of new jobs are created by small businesses. It's really an important part of the American economic scene. As a matter of fact, it's an important part of a hopeful America. Isn't it wonderful to have a country where people can come and have a dream and work hard and own their own business?

And so that's why throughout this administration we've been promoting the ownership society. I love it when I mean—I meet owners of a business. Many of them happen to be formed around a kitchen table. And you meet these men and women, and they just—with such pride, they tell you about their company, and they tell you about their employees, and they tell you how proud they are of being able to make it.

Well, it just turns out that 75 percent of the taxpayers who benefited from the reduction of the top bracket were small-business owners. So when you hear people say, "We're just going to tax the rich," American citizens have got to understand, because of the way these small businesses are set up, that they pay taxes at the individual income tax rate. And so when you hear "tax the rich," you're really talking about taxing mom and pop businesses. If 70 percent of the new jobs in America are created by small businesses, why would you want to take money out of their treasury? Why wouldn't you want to encourage them to thrive by letting them keep more of their hard-earned dollars?

If Congress doesn't act, 27 [sic] small-business owners will face a tax increase of \$4,066 on average. In other words, that \$4,000, on average, for the small businesses won't be available for investment, won't be available for programs that help their employees, will make it harder for them to compete.

And so I want to thank you all for your steadfast support of the American people and the American small-business owner by working to keep taxes low.

Today the Senate is debating a bill called the Warner-Lieberman bill, which would im-

pose roughly \$6 trillion of new costs on the American economy. There is a much better way to address the environment than imposing these costs on the job creators, which will ultimately have to be borne by American consumers. And I urge the Congress to be very careful about running up enormous costs for future generations of Americans.

We'll work with the Congress, but the idea of a huge spending bill fueled by taxes—increases—isn't the right way to proceed. And the right way for Congress to proceed on taxes in general is to send a clear message that these tax relief we passed need to be made permanent.

Thank you for your interest. Thank you for your concern about our fellow citizens. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11 a.m. in Room 450 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Lawrence B. Lindsey, president and chief executive officer, the Lindsey Group; Robert Carroll, vice president for economic policy, the Tax Foundation; John Rutledge, chairman, Rutledge Capital; and Martin A. Regalia, vice president for economic and tax policy and chief economist, U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

Statement on the Situation in Zimbabwe

June 2, 2008

The continued use of Government-sponsored violence in Zimbabwe, including unwarranted arrests and intimidation of opposition figures, to prevent the Movement for Democratic Change from campaigning freely ahead of the June 27 Presidential runoff election is deplorable. We call on the regime to immediately halt all attacks and to permit freedom of assembly, freedom of speech, and access to the media. We urge the Southern African Development Community, the African Union, the United Nations, and other international organizations to blanket the country with election and human rights monitors immediately.

We also are concerned by reports that misguided Government policies are projected to result in one of the worst crop harvests in Zimbabwean history. While Robert Mugabe

makes political statements in Rome, his people continue to face empty markets at home. The United States currently feeds more than 1 million Zimbabweans and spent more than \$170 million on food assistance in Zimbabwe last year. We will continue these efforts to prevent Government-induced starvation in Zimbabwe.

NOTE: The statement referred to President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe.

Proclamation 8268—National Oceans Month, 2008

June 2, 2008

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Oceans have provided an important part of our heritage, economy, and recreation, and they are a vital resource for our country and the world. During National Oceans Month, we reaffirm our commitment to protect and wisely use these precious waters and the habitat beneath them.

We have a solemn responsibility to care for our seas and show concern for the plant and animal life that inhabit them. Oceans bring enjoyment and prosperity to countless people, from boating and fishing, to transporting goods, to traveling the waterways. By being good stewards of the oceans, we can ensure that future generations are able to enjoy the great blessings of our natural heritage.

My Administration is committed to safeguarding the oceans and ensuring effective conservation. Since the release of my Ocean Action Plan in 2004, we have taken steps to prevent pollution and improve the health of marine wildlife by working with State, tribal, and local governments, as well as private sector and international partners. We are working to end overfishing in U.S. waters and to stop destructive fishing practices on the high seas. We are also supporting ocean programs to educate the public on the need to prevent marine debris and improve the quality of the marine environment, as well as other projects such as the International Coral Reef Initiative that can help conserve and restore deli-

cate and essential ecosystems. By working to protect our oceans, we ensure that natural wonders like the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands will be enjoyed for generations to come.

This month is an opportunity to show our gratitude toward all those who work to protect the oceans, to learn more about the vital role oceans play in the life of our country, and to discover ways we can conserve their many natural treasures.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim June 2008 as National Oceans Month. I encourage all our citizens to observe this month with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this second day of June, in the year of our Lord two thousand eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-second.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 9:56 a.m., June 4, 2008]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on June 5.

Remarks Honoring the 2008 NCAA Men's Basketball Champion University of Kansas Jayhawks

June 3, 2008

The President. Please sit down. Welcome. It's an honor to welcome the 2008 NCAA men's basketball champs, the Kansas Jayhawks. So when Kansas fans come to the Rose Garden, they don't come to admire the flowers. [Laughter] They come to "wave the wheat." I just wish Big Jay and Baby Jay could have come with you. Barney was looking forward to meeting them. [Laughter]

I want to congratulate this team. You brought new glory to one of our Nation's most storied basketball programs, and you gave your fans all across America one more reason to chant, "Rock Chalk Jayhawk!"

I appreciate Bob Hemenway, the chancellor, and his wife, Leah. Thanks for coming. Head coach Bill Self, Cindy, daughter, Lauren, and son, Tyler, we're sure glad you all are here.

I called coach after the championship. I think I might have woke you up.

Bill Self. By a hair. *[Laughter]*

The President. Yes. I said, "Would you like to come to the White House?" He said, "When?" *[Laughter]* And I'm glad you're here, coach, and congratulations.

I want to thank all the folks who represent KU: the personnel, coaches, and players.

Proud to welcome the United States Senators from Kansas—Senator Pat Roberts, honored you're here; KU Law School alum Senator Brownback—Sam Brownback—and Mary, who happened to be a KU undergrad and law school. KU undergrad and law school alum Jerry Moran; KU undergrad alums Dennis Moore and Stephene—thank you all for coming; Doug Lamborn from the great State of Colorado—KU undergrad and law school alum; Senator Bob Dole, one of the great KU citizens.

This team got off to an incredibly fast start. They won their first 20 games. They managed to beat Yale, my alma mater. *[Laughter]* I'm not sure how you did it, but nevertheless—*[laughter]*—it was a great victory. You won the Big 12 title. You were the number one seed in the Midwest region. God, blew through the competition early, and then you won a thriller against Davidson, which propelled you to the Final Four in San Antonio, Texas. By the way, to my fellow Texans on the team, nice to see you. *[Laughter]*

The interesting thing about the tournament in San Antonio was that all number one seeds made it to the Final Four. That's never happened before. It meant the competition was pretty tough. And this championship team gave America an unforgettable show; it really did.

In the semifinal match-up against North Carolina, you took a big lead, and you held on. It was a team effort, but you got to note that Brandon Rush did score 25 points in the game. *[Laughter]*

In the finals, you made a great comeback against Memphis. You overcame a 9-point deficit. Mario Chalmers, of course, hit the

3-pointer to send you into overtime. The guy is known as "Super Mario." *[Laughter]* Then he became known as MVP. *[Laughter]*

I know you got to be excited about winning an incredibly tough tournament. And your fans are excited, and I'm excited to welcome you to the Rose Garden. It's a big deal, as far as I'm concerned, to welcome KU to the Rose Garden.

Most of the players on this team have little or no memory of the last time Kansas won a national title, which would be 1988. As a matter of fact, I'm sure some of the players weren't even born yet. It's really hard to envision when you're an old guy like me and Roberts. *[Laughter]* The 1988 team became known as "Danny and the Miracles." And Danny Manning, welcome back to the White House.

This 2008 team will be remembered a little differently. More than any one player, Americans will remember the way you played as a team. They'll remember stifling defense. They'll remember the way seven different players led your team in scoring during the course of the season. Teamwork is a testament to the leadership of six seniors. It's a testament, as well, to a coach. Bill Self has proven himself to be one of the finest coaches in the land. And I'm sure—*[applause]*—and I am sure KU fans are delighted to know that he's going to keep coming back for awhile.

Good move, chancellor, good move. *[Laughter]*

The greatest testament to this team is also the character it showed not only on the court but off. It turns out—I often say this when I welcome championship teams here to the White House, but character matters a lot in order to become a champion. This is a team that when teammates lost loved ones, they had players-only meetings to help to rally their friends through a difficult time.

It's a team that reached out to others in need. Coach Self set the example by launching a foundation to help children in Lawrence build healthier and more wholesome lives. During the holiday, players purchased gifts for needy families. You signed hundreds of balls for charity auctions. You ran free basketball clinics for children. And I'm very thankful that you went to Walter Reed to

spend time with America's real heroes, our courageous wounded warriors.

I wish those of you going to pro ball all the very best. Some of us are going to be out of work soon. We may be looking for loans. [*Laughter*] I welcome you to the White House. Good luck next season. And may God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Cindy Self, wife of University of Kansas men's basketball head coach Bill Self; Mary Brownback, wife of Senator Sam Brownback; Stephen Moore, wife of Representative Dennis Moore; former Senator Bob Dole; and Brandon Rush and Mario Chalmers, guards, and Danny Manning, assistant coach, University of Kansas men's basketball team.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel

June 4, 2008

President Bush. Mr. Prime Minister, welcome back. First of all, I want to thank you and your good bride for being such gracious hosts to Laura and me. I loved my trip to Israel. It was really a meaningful trip, and a lot of it had to do with your gracious hospitality. So I welcome you back here to Washington. You come back as my friend. I'm glad to see my friend.

I'm looking forward to our discussions on the issues that we have spent a lot of time discussing up to now. We'll be, of course, talking about the Palestinian issue, the peace process. Now, we'll be talking about Lebanon. I'm looking forward to your wisdom about how you see the Syrian issue. And finally, we're going to spend a lot of time talking about Iran. Iran is an existential threat to peace, and it's very important for the world to take the Iranian threat seriously, which the United States does, as the Prime Minister will tell you. And we will continue our discussions about that subject as well.

So, glad you're here. Good to see you.

Prime Minister Olmert. Thank you very much, President.

President Bush. Yes, sir.

Prime Minister Olmert. Thank you. Well, I am delighted to be again at the Oval Office as a guest of my friend President Bush. We enjoyed tremendously your visit in Israel. From a national point of view, people of Israel were absolutely excited and moved by your spectacular speech in the Knesset, which was the best expression of the United States commitment to the security and the well-being of the State of Israel, which was appreciated by everyone in the State of Israel.

And we had many discussions, that you have mentioned, on the main issues: the peace process with the Palestinians; situation in Lebanon; the contacts that hopefully may lead to pull out Syria from the axis of evil, which is very important; and also, naturally, about the main threat to all of us, which is Iran. And as you said, President, indeed we talked all about this.

From a personal point of view, I can only say that I admire your friendship and your commitment and your emotions, as they were expressed in such a powerful manner in your visit to the State of Israel.

President Bush. Thank you.

Prime Minister Olmert. And they loved you and Laura very much. And part of my mission is to make you feel this way. Thank you very much.

President Bush. Thank you very much.

Prime Minister Olmert. Thank you.

President Bush. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:54 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Aliza Olmert, wife of Prime Minister Olmert.

Memorandum on Suspension of Limitations Under the Jerusalem Embassy Act

June 4, 2008

Presidential Determination No. 2008-20

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Suspension of Limitations Under the Jerusalem Embassy Act

Pursuant to the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws

of the United States, including section 7(a) of the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995 (Public Law 104-45) (the “Act”), I hereby determine that it is necessary, in order to protect the national security interests of the United States, to suspend for a period of 6 months the limitations set forth in sections 3(b) and 7(b) of the Act. My Administration remains committed to beginning the process of moving our Embassy to Jerusalem.

You are hereby authorized and directed to transmit this determination to the Congress, accompanied by a report in accordance with section 7(a) of the Act, and to publish the determination in the *Federal Register*.

This suspension shall take effect after transmission of this determination and report to the Congress.

George W. Bush

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Bulgaria-United States Taxation Convention

June 4, 2008

To the Senate of the United States:

I transmit herewith, for Senate advice and consent to ratification, the Convention Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion With Respect to Taxes on Income, with accompanying Protocol, signed at Washington on February 23, 2007 (the “Proposed Treaty”), as well as the Protocol Amending the Convention Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion With Respect to Taxes on Income, signed at Sofia on February 26, 2008 (the “Proposed Protocol of Amendment”). The Proposed Treaty and Proposed Protocol of Amendment are consistent with U.S. tax treaty policy. Also transmitted for the information of the Senate is the report of the Department of State with respect to the Proposed Treaty and Proposed Protocol of Amendment.

The Proposed Treaty generally reduces the withholding tax on cross-border dividend,

interest, and royalty payments. Importantly, the Proposed Treaty generally eliminates withholding tax on cross-border dividend payments to pension funds and cross-border interest payments made to financial institutions. The Proposed Treaty also contains provisions, consistent with current U.S. tax treaty policy, that are designed to prevent so-called treaty shopping. The Proposed Protocol of Amendment further strengthens these treaty shopping provisions.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Proposed Treaty and give its advice and consent to ratification to both the Proposed Treaty and the Proposed Protocol of Amendment.

George W. Bush

The White House,
June 4, 2008.

Remarks at a Groundbreaking Ceremony for the United States Institute of Peace

June 5, 2008

Thank you all. Please be seated. Mr. Secretary, thank you for your kind introduction. And thank you for inviting me to join you to break ground for the United States Institute of Peace’s new home. I’m really pleased to be here. I appreciate what you do to resolve conflict and support new democracies and to build peace by promoting effective diplomacy. And speaking about effective diplomacy, it seems like you used some to get this special piece of land. I congratulate you on picking a wonderful site.

I thank Robin West, the Chairman; Dick Solomon, the President. Members of the Board of Directors, thank you for being here. I’m so pleased to be with the Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, and some of her predecessors. Thank you for being here. I appreciate Admiral Mullen joining us. I want to thank members of my administration for coming. Madam Speaker, you grace us with your presence. Thank you for coming. I also want to pay homage to Ted Stevens for helping to secure the funding for this important site, as well as Members of the United States

Senate who have joined him here and Members of the House. I appreciate Reverend Lovett, Father Hesburgh, members of the diplomatic corps, ladies and gentlemen.

The Institute of Peace was founded in 1984. It was during the last great ideological struggle of the 20th century. This was the struggle against Soviet communism, a struggle that was eventually won by freedom because of peace through strength and because of the help of the Institute of Peace.

We're in a different struggle today, but we're in an ideological struggle against violent extremism. The U.S. Institute of Peace is playing an important role, and I thank you for that. In Afghanistan, you're helping a young democracy establish the rule of law and strengthen public education and build a civil society. In Iraq, you're helping the nation overcome the legacy of decades of tyranny by strengthening government institutions and promoting peaceful engagement. And although the struggle against violent extremism is in its early years, there's no doubt in my mind, freedom will again prevail, and your help is going to be important.

In this struggle, we're guided by a clear principle: Freedom is universal. We believe that freedom is the birthright of every man, woman, and child. Free societies are peaceful societies. Freedom helps supplant the conditions of hopelessness that extremists exploit to recruit terrorists and suicide bombers. People who live in liberty are less likely to turn to ideologies of hatred and fear. And that is why the United States is leading and must continue to lead the cause of freedom for the sake of peace.

September the 11th, we saw how the lack of freedom in other lands can bring death and destruction to our own land. Our most solemn obligation is to protect the American people. That is why we're pursuing and bringing to justice terrorists. We're fighting them overseas so we don't have to face them here in the United States of America.

But the effort requires more. It requires using the power of liberty to marginalize extremists. And the best way to do so is to use our national resources to strengthen the institutions of freedom. That's what I want to talk to you about today—briefly, you'll be pleased to hear.

Institutions, of course, include a democratic system of government, a vibrant free press, independent judiciary, a free enterprise system, places of worship where people are free to practice their faith. These institutions include an education system that provides citizens a link to the world, health infrastructure that combats plagues like HIV/AIDS and malaria, and women's organizations that help societies take advantage of the skills and talents of half their population.

We're helping nations across the world build these institutions, and we face three challenges as we do so. First of all, there are developing nations, many on the continent of Africa, that are facing extreme poverty and health epidemics and humanitarian catastrophes and are therefore vulnerable to extremists who take advantage of chaos and instability.

Secondly, there are nations like Colombia and Lebanon and Pakistan that are facing transnational threats from drug cartels or terrorist networks that seek safe haven on their territory and threaten to overwhelm their institutions.

And thirdly, there are nations like Afghanistan and Iraq, where we removed dangerous regimes that threatened our people and now have a special obligation to help them build free societies that their—that become allies in the fight against these extremists.

It's in America's vital interest to help all these nations combat ideologies of hate. It's in our security interest to eliminate safe havens for terrorists and extremists. It's in our national interest to develop institutions that allow them to govern their territories effectively and improve their lives.

We've been making transformations over the last 8 years to make these capabilities more real and more effective. We're transforming the United States military so we can deliver justice to the terrorists in a more effective way. We're transforming America's capabilities to help poor and struggling societies become healthy and prosperous.

And we've seen those effective transformations through the Emergency Plan for AIDS or malaria initiative or the Millennium Challenge Account. The Millennium Challenge Account represents a different approach to development. It rewards nations

that govern responsibly and fight corruption and invest in the health and education of their people and use the power of free markets and free trade to lift the people out of poverty.

One thing in common for all these programs is, we insist upon results, and we measure. And the results are coming in, and millions of people are benefiting from this foreign policy initiative. And they deserve to be fully supported by the United States Congress.

We're also transforming America's capabilities to helping emergency—emerging democracies build free institutions while under fire from terrorists and under pressure from state sponsors of terror. And this is a new challenge that we face at the start of the 21st century. And as we've adopted to meet these new circumstances, there have been successes and setbacks, and we've learned some lessons.

One lesson is that before nations under fire from terrorists can make political and economic progress, their populations need basic security. Sometimes local security institutions, with training and equipment and support from the outside, can handle the task. Take, for example, Colombia. Colombia and America launched an ambitious program that helped rescue that country from the brink of becoming a failed state. Plan Colombia, which started under my predecessor, made it clear that the United States would help the Colombian Government modernize its military and fight the FARC terrorists, expand education opportunity, provide Colombians with alternatives to a life of terror and narcotrafficking. Congress has an opportunity to strengthen these efforts, and I strongly urge them to send a clear and sound message to the people of Colombia and the region that we stand with them by passing the Colombia free trade agreement.

In other situations, America is training international peacekeepers so they can deploy to provide security in troubled regions. We've started what's called the Global Peace Operations Initiative. The whole idea is to work to train international peacekeeping forces so they can do the work necessary to provide stability and security, so institutions can advance. So far, we've trained more than

40,000 peacekeepers, and the plan is to train 75,000 additional.

These instances where America has removed regimes that threaten us, American troops may need to play a direct role in providing security. In Iraq, 2006, the country was descending into sectarian chaos. So we launched the surge—30,000 additional troops to work with Iraqi forces to protect the Iraqi people from terrorists, insurgents, and illegal militias. Today, because we acted, violence in Iraq is down to its lowest point since late March of 2004. Civilian deaths are down. Sectarian killings are down. Security has improved, as well as the economy. Political reconciliation is taking place at the grassroots and Federal level. And as the Iraqi security forces are becoming more capable, our troops are beginning to come home under a policy of return on success.

A lesson we've learned is that civilian expertise is vital to strengthening the institutions of freedom. In Iraq and Afghanistan, we've developed an important tool to tap into civilian expertise called Provincial Reconstruction Teams. PRTs bring together civilian, diplomatic, and military personnel. They move into communities that our military has cleared of terrorists. They help ensure that security gains are followed with real improvements in daily life by helping local leaders create jobs and deliver basic services and build up local economies.

PRTs are uniquely suited to situations like Afghanistan and Iraq. In the future, civilian expertise will be needed in other countries where we do not have ongoing military operations. At the moment, we lack the capability to rapidly deploy civilian experts with the right skills to trouble spots around the world. We launched what's called a Civilian Stabilization Initiative, which is being run out of the State Department in the Office of Reconstruction and Stabilization.

One element of the new office is an Active Response Corps, made up of civilian experts from many Government Agencies who deploy full-time to at-risk countries. This corps will eventually include 250 personnel from the Departments of State and Justice, Agriculture, Commerce, AID, and other civilian agencies with relevant expertise.

Another element is the Standby Reserve [Response]* Corps, which is a reserve force of current and former Government employees who volunteer to be an on call supplemental force that can deploy for reconstruction and stabilization missions on short notice.

And finally, this initiative will include a new Civilian Reserve Corps that will function much like our military reserve. It will be made up of American citizens with critical skills, such as police officers and judges and prosecutors and engineers and doctors and public administrators. The corps will give people across America who do not wear the uniform a chance to serve in the defining struggle of our time.

Legislation authorizing the Civilian Reserve Corps has passed the House of Representatives. It's awaiting action in the Senate. And I strongly urge Congress to pass this bipartisan legislation as soon as possible.

Another lesson is, is that in aiding the rise of strong and stable democracies requires that—the efforts of much more than Washington, DC. It requires the efforts of other governments and nonorganizational—nongovernmental organizations and people around the world.

The work of democratic development is the work of all free nations. This is precisely the message that Secretary Rice and I have been carrying around the world. We're rallying other nations to train peacekeepers to support Afghanistan and Iraq and to act boldly to alleviate hunger and poverty.

I'm going to the G-8 in Japan in the month of July. The last G-8, our partners stood up and made strong commitments to help Africa deal with malaria and HIV/AIDS. They have yet to make good on their commitments. And I will remind them, it's one thing to make a promise; it's another thing to write the check. And the American Government expects our partners to live up to their obligations.

The work of democratic development sometimes requires young democracies under siege to band together with partnerships to deal with common threats. And this is the approach we're taking in Central

America. We've encouraged nations threatened by narcotraffickers to cooperate in protecting their people. The supplemental that's being debated in the Congress will help further this effort by linking Mexico and Central America with U.S. to have a joint strategy, protecting our hemisphere from narcotraffickers and the terrorists that they ultimately yield. I asked Congress to approve the request quickly in the supplemental without putting unreasonable conditions on the vital aid.

One thing is for certain: That if we expect democracies to prevail, to marginalize the extremists, countries—it requires countries to have good, strong democratic leaders. And the best way to encourage that is to have them come to our colleges and universities. We've made good progress about changing the student visa regime after 9/11. We've increased the number of students coming here. And it's in our interest that we continue to increase the number of students coming to study in the United States.

And finally, the work of democratic development is the work of nongovernmental organizations, like the U.S. Institute of Peace. Obviously, these organizations can go into countries where it's harder for governments to operate. So it's very important for this Government and future Governments to always be a strong and steady partner to nongovernmental organizations and groups like the U.S. Institute of Peace.

The work of democratic development is the great cause of our time, and we shouldn't shy away from it. And we must be confident in our ability to help others realize the blessings of freedom. My big concern is that the United States becomes isolationist and nervous; we don't support those values that have stood the test of time. The Institute of Peace, I hope, will make sure that never happens.

Our fellow citizens can help in many ways. They can join an organization like this one. They can join the civilian reserve. They can become—like thousands of other compassionate citizens—become soldiers in the armies of compassion by helping HIV/AIDS victims or help educate people around the world. Or they can make the noble choice that has sustained freedom for generations and join the United States military. However

* White House correction.

they choose to serve, advancing the cause of liberty is necessary to advance the cause of peace.

I'm honored to be with you today. Looking forward to coming back someday to see this building when it's built. Thanks for your efforts. Thanks for your mission. May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:49 a.m. at Navy Hill. In his remarks, he referred to former Secretary of State George P. Shultz, who introduced the President, and Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, cochairs, Building for Peace Campaign, U.S. Institute of Peace; J. Robinson West, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Richard H. Solomon, President, and Rev. Sidney Lovett (Ret.), former member of the Board of Directors, U.S. Institute of Peace; and Adm. Michael G. Mullen, USN, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende of the Netherlands

June 5, 2008

President Bush. Mr. Prime Minister, thanks for coming back. I enjoyed being with you. You represent a great country. You're a good friend of the United States of America, and I appreciate our candid discussion of a variety of issues.

First, I want to thank you and your folks for helping the people of Afghanistan realize the blessings of liberty. There is a—we're engaged in a struggle against ideologues who use murder to achieve their political objectives. One way to help—and defeat those folks and marginalize them is to help others realize the blessings of a free society. And I appreciate your courage, and I appreciate the troops, and—but the people of Afghanistan appreciate them more.

We had a good discussion on a variety of issues. We talked about the need for—to continue our close cooperation on a series of issues. I appreciate very much your concern about the people on the continent of Africa, your concern about people needlessly dying because of HIV/AIDS. I share those same concerns with you.

Talked about completing the WTO round, the Doha round. The Prime Minister and I both agree, a world that trades freely is a world that is a more hopeful world and, certainly, a way to help people grow out of poverty.

And we talked about the climate issue. I assured him that the United States is concerned about the issue. We're concerned about being dependent on oil. And the two happen to go hand in hand. And we've developed a strategy to encourage the advent of new technologies that will change our habits; at the same time, allow us to empower our economy in a way that will help us be good stewards in the environment. I want to thank you for your candid discussion on that.

Relations—bilateral relations with our countries are very strong and very good. And I can't thank you enough for coming. Welcome.

Prime Minister Balkenende. Mr. President, thank you very much for the hospitality and the friendship. It is true what you're saying about the bilateral relations between the United States and the Netherlands; they are very good. And also next year, and we have the 400-year celebration of the fact that Henry Hudson came, on behalf of the Dutch East Indian Company, to Manhattan.

President Bush. That's right.

Prime Minister Balkenende. And they'll be celebrated then. And just an example of the long tradition we have.

At this moment, we're working together. And you referred to that, by example, in Africa. In the struggle against HIV/AIDS, we are working together. We also are working together on the issue of deforestation in Latin America. There will be a meeting in Suriname in September, and we are supporting that event. And thanks for your remarks about our cooperation and the activities of our military people in Afghanistan. It's necessary to work together.

Of course, when you are friends, sometimes there are issues you do not agree about, but because you have a friendship, then you can talk about finding solutions and talk about critical aspects. We also talked about the European Union, and I'm convinced that the United States and the European Union share the same values. You talked about it:

freedom, human rights and democracy, economic dynamism, sustainable development. And I think we—if we work together, we really can make a difference. And I think it's necessary.

So I'm really looking forward of the new administration also to have a good cooperation between the European Union and the United States.

It was also important what you said about role of multilateral channels, the United Nations, but also, we talked about the NATO. And it is important to make progress on the issues of climate change and energy. We have so many things in common.

So I want to thank you very much for hospitality, the cooperation. You know, there are really close ties between the people of the United States and the Netherlands. And I'm sure that will continue in the—in future. And when we talk about these issue—important issues like human rights, freedom, democracy—they—we have, really, a common responsibility.

I wish you all the best. I presume this will be the last time here in the White House when you're in office. I wish you all the best, and thanks again for the hospitality.

President Bush. Thank you, sir. Thank you.

Prime Minister Balkenende. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:13 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Statement on Senate Confirmation of Steven C. Preston as Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development

June 5, 2008

I am pleased that the Senate unanimously confirmed Steve Preston to serve as Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Steve is a strong leader whose understanding of our financial markets and strong management skills make him highly qualified to serve in this important position. He will aggressively work to ensure that the Department remains focused on its mission of making housing more affordable and helping

Americans keep their homes. Steve is also a consensus-builder who will build on our efforts to work with Congress on responsible legislation addressing our Nation's housing policies.

Directive on Biometrics for Identification and Screening To Enhance National Security

June 5, 2008

National Security Presidential Directive/NSPD-59

Homeland Security Presidential Directive/HSPD-24

Subject: Biometrics for Identification and Screening to Enhance National Security

Purpose

This directive establishes a framework to ensure that Federal executive departments and agencies (agencies) use mutually compatible methods and procedures in the collection, storage, use, analysis, and sharing of biometric and associated biographic and contextual information of individuals in a lawful and appropriate manner, while respecting their information privacy and other legal rights under United States law.

Scope

(1) The executive branch has developed an integrated screening capability to protect the Nation against "known and suspected terrorists" (KSTs). The executive branch shall build upon this success, in accordance with this directive, by enhancing its capability to collect, store, use, analyze, and share biometrics to identify and screen KSTs and other persons who may pose a threat to national security.

(2) Existing law determines under what circumstances an individual's biometric and biographic information can be collected. This directive requires agencies to use, in a more coordinated and efficient manner, all biometric information associated with persons who may pose a threat to national security, consistent with applicable law, including those laws relating to privacy and confidentiality of personal data.

(3) This directive provides a Federal framework for applying existing and emerging biometric technologies to the collection, storage, use, analysis, and sharing of data in identification and screening processes employed by agencies to enhance national security, consistent with applicable law, including information privacy and other legal rights under United States law.

(4) The executive branch recognizes the need for a layered approach to identification and screening of individuals, as no single mechanism is sufficient. For example, while existing name-based screening procedures are beneficial, application of biometric technologies, where appropriate, improve the executive branch's ability to identify and screen for persons who may pose a national security threat. To be most effective, national security identification and screening systems will require timely access to the most accurate and most complete biometric, biographic, and related data that are, or can be, made available throughout the executive branch.

(5) This directive does not impose requirements on State, local, or tribal authorities or on the private sector. It does not provide new authority to agencies for collection, retention, or dissemination of information or for identification and screening activities.

Definitions

(6) In this directive:

- (a) "Biometrics" refers to the measurable biological (anatomical and physiological) and behavioral characteristics that can be used for automated recognition; examples include fingerprint, face, and iris recognition; and
- (b) "Interoperability" refers to the ability of two or more systems or components to exchange information and to use the information that has been exchanged.

Background

(7) The ability to positively identify those individuals who may do harm to Americans and the Nation is crucial to protecting the Nation. Since September 11, 2001, agencies have made considerable progress in securing the Nation through the integration, maintenance, and sharing of information used to

identify persons who may pose a threat to national security.

(8) Many agencies already collect biographic and biometric information in their identification and screening processes. With improvements in biometric technologies, and in light of its demonstrated value as a tool to protect national security, it is important to ensure agencies use compatible methods and procedures in the collection, storage, use, analysis, and sharing of biometric information.

(9) Building upon existing investments in fingerprint recognition and other biometric modalities, agencies are currently strengthening their biometric collection, storage, and matching capabilities as technologies advance and offer new opportunities to meet evolving threats to further enhance national security.

(10) This directive is designed to (a) help ensure a common recognition of the value of using biometrics in identification and screening programs and (b) help achieve objectives described in the following: Executive Order 12881 (Establishment of the National Science and Technology Council); Homeland Security Presidential Directive-6 (HSPD-6) (Integration and Use of Screening Information to Protect Against Terrorism); Executive Order 13354 (National Counterterrorism Center); Homeland Security Presidential Directive-11 (HSPD-11) (Comprehensive Terrorist Related Screening Procedures); Executive Order 13388 (Further Strengthening the Sharing of Terrorism Information to Protect Americans); National Security Presidential Directive-46/Homeland Security Presidential Directive-15 (NSPD-46/HSPD-15) (U.S. Policy and Strategy in the War on Terror); 2005 Information Sharing Guidelines; 2006 National Strategy for Combating Terrorism; 2006 National Strategy to Combat Terrorist Travel; 2007 National Strategy for Homeland Security; 2007 National Strategy for Information Sharing; and 2008 United States Intelligence Community Information Sharing Strategy.

Policy

(11) Through integrated processes and interoperable systems, agencies shall, to the

fullest extent permitted by law, make available to other agencies all biometric and associated biographic and contextual information associated with persons for whom there is an articulable and reasonable basis for suspicion that they pose a threat to national security.

(12) All agencies shall execute this directive in a lawful and appropriate manner, respecting the information privacy and other legal rights of individuals under United States law, maintaining data integrity and security, and protecting intelligence sources, methods, activities, and sensitive law enforcement information.

Policy Coordination

(13) The Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, in coordination with the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs and the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, shall be responsible for inter-agency policy coordination on all aspects of this directive.

Roles and Responsibilities

(14) Agencies shall undertake the roles and responsibilities herein to the fullest extent permitted by law, consistent with the policy of this directive, including appropriate safeguards for information privacy and other legal rights, and in consultation with State, local, and tribal authorities, where appropriate.

(15) The Attorney General shall:

- (a) Provide legal policy guidance, in coordination with the Secretaries of State, Defense, and Homeland Security and the Director of National Intelligence (DNI), regarding the lawful collection, use, and sharing of biometric and associated biographic and contextual information to enhance national security; and
- (b) In coordination with the DNI, ensure that policies and procedures for the consolidated terrorist watchlist maximize the use of all biometric identifiers.

(16) Each of the Secretaries of State, Defense, and Homeland Security, the Attorney

General, the DNI, and the heads of other appropriate agencies, shall:

- (a) Develop and implement mutually compatible guidelines for each respective agency for the collection, storage, use, analysis, and sharing of biometric and associated biographic and contextual information, to the fullest extent practicable, lawful, and necessary to protect national security;
- (b) Maintain and enhance interoperability among agency biometric and associated biographic systems, by utilizing common information technology and data standards, protocols, and interfaces;
- (c) Ensure compliance with laws, policies, and procedures respecting information privacy, other legal rights, and information security;
- (d) Establish objectives, priorities, and guidance to ensure timely and effective tasking, collection, storage, use, analysis, and sharing of biometric and associated biographic and contextual information among authorized agencies;
- (e) Program for and budget sufficient resources to support the development, operation, maintenance, and upgrade of biometric capabilities consistent with this directive and with such instructions as the Director of the Office of Management and Budget may provide; and
- (f) Ensure that biometric and associated biographic and contextual information on KSTs is provided to the National Counterterrorism Center and, as appropriate, to the Terrorist Screening Center.

(17) The Secretary of State, in coordination with the Secretaries of Defense and Homeland Security, the Attorney General, and the DNI, shall coordinate the sharing of biometric and associated biographic and contextual information with foreign partners in accordance with applicable law, including international obligations undertaken by the United States.

(18) The Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, through the National Science and Technology Council (NSTC),

shall coordinate executive branch biometric science and technology policy, including biometric standards and necessary research, development, and conformance testing programs. Recommended executive branch biometric standards are contained in the Registry of United States Government Recommended Biometric Standards and shall be updated via the NSTC Subcommittee on Biometrics and Identity Management.

Implementation

(19) Within 90 days of the date of this directive, the Attorney General, in coordination with the Secretaries of State, Defense, and Homeland Security, the DNI, and the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, shall, through the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs and the Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, submit for the President's approval an action plan to implement this directive. The action plan shall do the following:

- (a) Recommend actions and associated timelines for enhancing the existing terrorist-oriented identification and screening processes by expanding the use of biometrics;
- (b) Consistent with applicable law, (i) recommend categories of individuals in addition to KSTs who may pose a threat to national security, and (ii) set forth cost-effective actions and associated timelines for expanding the collection and use of biometrics to identify and screen for such individuals; and
- (c) Identify business processes, technological capabilities, legal authorities, and research and development efforts needed to implement this directive.

(20) Within 1 year of the date of this directive, the Attorney General, in coordination with the Secretaries of State, Defense, and Homeland Security, the DNI, and the heads of other appropriate agencies, shall submit to the President, through the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs and the Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, a report on the implementation of this directive and the associated action plan, proposing any nec-

essary additional steps for carrying out the policy of this directive. Agencies shall provide support for, and promptly respond to, requests made by the Attorney General in furtherance of this report. The Attorney General will thereafter report to the President on the implementation of this directive as the Attorney General deems necessary or when directed by the President.

General Provisions

(21) This directive:

- (a) shall be implemented consistent with applicable law, including international obligations undertaken by the United States, and the authorities of agencies, or heads of such agencies, vested by law;
- (b) shall not be construed to alter, amend, or revoke any other NSPD or HSPD in effect on the effective date of this directive;
- (c) is not intended to, and does not, create any rights or benefits, substantive or procedural, enforceable by law or in equity by a party against the United States, its departments, agencies, instrumentalities, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

George W. Bush

Remarks at the Congressional Picnic June 5, 2008

The President. Welcome. Thank you for coming. Laura and I are thrilled you're here. Vice President and Lynne Cheney are happy you're here as well. This is a chance for us to thank the Members of Congress and their families for serving the United States of America. I hope you have found it as great a joy serving our country as we have. The South Lawn is full of anticipation and excitement. There's square dancing and trains and obviously balloon hats. *[Laughter]*

Audience member. It's a cowgirl hat.

The President. Cowgirl hat. Madam Speaker, thank you for coming. I'm—appreciate you bringing your family. Leaders of the House and the Senate, thanks for serving. I'm really thrilled to be able to introduce a

friend of my family's—friends of my family for a long period of time. We're really lucky to have with us today the Oak Ridge Boys. I'm honored they are here.

Thank you all for coming. Please enjoy yourselves. May God bless you and your families. And may God continue to bless the United States of America. Thank you for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:43 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to entertainers the Oak Ridge Boys.

Remarks Following a Meeting on Earthquake Relief Efforts in China

June 6, 2008

Thank you very much, Bonnie, for inviting me here. I'm proud to be here with Secretary of State Rice, Secretary of Treasury Paulson. Ambassador, thank you for being here.

I've just been briefed about how the United States private sector, faith-based community, NGO community's responding to what is a horrible human disaster in China—estimated 70,000 people have died, 18,000 people missing, 15 million people homeless, and the tally is still being counted. There's no question, this is a major human disaster that requires a strong response from the Chinese Government, which is what they're providing, but it also responds—a compassionate response from nations to whom—for—that have got the blessings—good blessings of life, and that's us.

I told the folks assembled here that I'm not surprised that the American people have responded to this challenge. And the reason I'm not surprised is, we're a compassionate, decent nation that cares deeply about a stranger who hurts. And so the response of the—so far of our American citizens have been impressive—unprecedented and unparalleled in its compassion.

There'll be more work that needs to be done. My message to the Chinese Government is, thank you for welcoming our aid; thank you for taking a firm response to this disaster; and just know the American people care about the people of China. When a brother and sister hurts, we care about it.

And so that's why our response has been so robust and so compassionate to date. I want to thank you all from the bottom of my heart for showing the great compassion of America.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:43 a.m. at the American Red Cross National Headquarters. In his remarks, he referred to Bonnie McElveen-Hunter, chairman of the board of governors, American Red Cross; and China's Ambassador to the U.S. Zhou Wenzhong.

Remarks at a Swearing-In Ceremony for Steven C. Preston as the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development

June 6, 2008

Thank you all. Please be seated. Thank you. Welcome. Thank you. It's a—so glad to be here at the Department of Housing and Urban Development. And I've come to introduce you to your new boss, Secretary Steve Preston. I want to thank Steve's wife, Molly, five children, and his mom and dad, Lee and Ursula.

Mr. Secretary, thanks for coming—Secretary Kempthorne; and Director John Walters. It's good to see two of your predecessors here, Steve—Alphonso Jackson and Jack Kemp. Thank you all for coming.

This is a time of turbulence in the housing market and slow growth for our overall economy. This morning the Labor Department reported that our economy lost 49,000 jobs in May and the unemployment rate rose to 5.5 percent. This rise was caused, in part, by a surge of new, young entrants into the job market, but it's clearly a sign that is consistent with slow economic growth.

To help keep this economy growing, we did pass an economic stimulus package that provides tax rebates for American families and incentives for businesses to invest in new equipment. We're beginning to see the signs that the stimulus may be working. And now the Congress needs to take the next steps. At a time when Americans are concerned about higher gas prices, Congress needs to pass legislation that expands—it will allow for

the expansion of American energy production.

In this period of economic uncertainty, the last thing the Americans need is a massive tax increase. So Congress needs to send a clear message that the tax relief that we passed will be made permanent.

Unfortunately, these policies are being blocked by the Democratic Congress. So I call on congressional leaders to put partisanship aside and work with me to enact these important initiatives for the American people.

This Department is also critical to meeting the challenges we face in our economy. We need strong leadership in the Secretary's office. Steve Preston is the right man for the job. He's a financial expert who understands how the housing market impacts our broader economy. He's a skilled manager. He's a person of character and integrity.

Secretary Preston will work to strengthen homeownership with the same dedication he brought to his previous job of strengthening American small-business community. As the head of the SBA, Steve presided over loan guarantee programs that are similar in structure to those run by the Federal Housing Administration. And just as an entrepreneurs across our Nation found a trusted friend in Steve Preston, so will America's homeowners.

Before coming to the SBA, Steve gained valuable financial and leadership experience in the private sector. His impressive career has taken him from investment banking to senior financial posts at major corporations. Wherever he's gone, Steve has earned the admiration of his colleagues. He takes on this new challenge with my full confidence and my trust.

Steve takes over for a good man, my long-time buddy, Secretary Alphonso Jackson. I thank you for your compassion and your hard work. You helped change a lot of lives. And I wish you and Marcia all the very best. See you back in Texas. *[Laughter]*

I also want to thank Deputy Secretary Roy Bernardi for his service. He filled in as the Acting Secretary during this transition. He spent nearly 7 years of his life here at this Department. And I appreciate your hard work on behalf of all Americans.

As Steve takes office, his first priority will [be] * to help lead my administration's response to the challenges in the housing market. We've taken aggressive action to help responsible homeowners to keep their homes by giving the FHA greater flexibility to offer refinancing options. We're also helping to bring together what's now called the HOPE NOW Alliance. By working together, participants in the mortgage industry have helped more than 1 million—1½ million families stay in their homes. HOPE NOW is working, but we've got more to do.

Yesterday we learned that the foreclosure rates continued to rise in the first quarter. So Steve will work with Democrats and Republicans in Congress to address this challenge. We need to pass legislation to reform Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. We need to pass legislation to modernize the Federal Housing Administration and allow State housing agencies to issue tax-free bonds to help homeowners refinance their mortgages. By taking these steps, we'll help more responsible homeowners weather this rough patch and, at the same time, strengthen the dream of homeownership for generations to come.

I've got confidence that we're going to meet these challenges, and I got confidence in the people who work in this Department. I appreciate what you do every day to expand the dream of homeownership. I thank you for your efforts to provide low-income Americans with access to affordable housing. You work hard to make sure our communities are more vibrant and hopeful. The United States is fortunate to have such devoted public servants in this Department. And I'm grateful for your service.

You're going to have a worthy leader in Steve Preston. I thank the Senate for confirming Steve as your new Secretary. And now I ask the Senate to confirm the three remaining HUD nominees to help him lead this Department.

Steve, I appreciate your stepping forward to serve your country once again. I congratulate you. And now I ask my Chief of Staff, Josh Bolten, to administer the oath of office.

* White House correction.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:55 p.m. at the Department of Housing and Urban Development. In his remarks, he referred to Marcia Jackson, wife of former Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Alphonso R. Jackson. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Secretary Preston.

Proclamation 8269—Flag Day and National Flag Week, 2008

June 6, 2008

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

The American flag has been our national symbol for 231 years, and it remains a beacon of freedom wherever it is flown. Since the Second Continental Congress adopted the Stars and Stripes as our flag in 1777, it has stood for freedom, justice, and the resolve of our Nation.

When Francis Scott Key saw the American flag flying over Fort McHenry in 1814, he believed that liberty would triumph. The flag that inspired Key to write our National Anthem still energizes and emboldens the American spirit today. As our Nation faces the challenges of a new era, Old Glory reminds us that liberty can prevail over oppression.

Since the first days of our Republic, Americans have flown the flag to show their pride and appreciation for the freedoms they enjoy in this great Nation. Every day, Americans pledge their allegiance to the flag of the United States, and our troops carry it before them as they defend the liberties for which it stands.

On Flag Day and during National Flag Week, we remember those in uniform whose courage and sacrifice inspire us here at home. We also remember the rich history of one of our oldest national symbols and reflect on our duty to carry our heritage of freedom into the future.

To commemorate the adoption of our flag, the Congress, by joint resolution approved

August 3, 1949, as amended (63 Stat. 492), designated June 14 of each year as “Flag Day” and requested that the President issue an annual proclamation calling for its observance and for the display of the flag of the United States on all Federal Government buildings. The Congress also requested, by joint resolution approved June 9, 1966, as amended (80 Stat. 194), that the President issue annually a proclamation designating the week in which June 14 occurs as “National Flag Week” and calling upon all citizens of the United States to display the flag during that week.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim June 14, 2008, as Flag Day and the week beginning June 8, 2008, as National Flag Week. I direct the appropriate officials to display the flag on all Federal Government buildings during that week, and I urge all Americans to observe Flag Day and National Flag Week by flying the Stars and Stripes from their homes and other appropriate places. I also call upon the people of the United States to observe with pride and all due ceremony those days from Flag Day through Independence Day, also set aside by the Congress (89 Stat. 211), as a time to honor America, to celebrate our heritage in public gatherings and activities, and to publicly recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this sixth day of June, in the year of our Lord two thousand eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-second.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., June 10, 2008]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on June 11.

Notice—Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Actions and Policies of Certain Members of the Government of Belarus and Other Persons Undermining Democratic Processes or Institutions in Belarus

June 6, 2008

On June 16, 2006, by Executive Order 13405, I declared a national emergency and ordered related measures blocking the property of certain persons undermining democratic processes or institutions in Belarus, pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701–1706). I took this action to deal with the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States constituted by the actions and policies of certain members of the Government of Belarus and other persons that have undermined democratic processes or institutions; committed human rights abuses related to political repression, including detentions and disappearances; and engaged in public corruption, including by diverting or misusing Belarusian public assets or by misusing public authority.

Because these actions and policies continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States, the national emergency declared on June 16, 2006, and the measures adopted on that date to deal with that emergency, must continue in effect beyond June 16, 2008. Therefore, in accordance with section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)), I am continuing for 1 year the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13405.

This notice shall be published in the *Federal Register* and transmitted to the Congress.

George W. Bush

The White House,
June 6, 2008.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:54 a.m., June 9, 2008]

NOTE: This notice will be published in the *Federal Register* on June 10.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Actions and Policies of Certain Members of the Government of Belarus and Other Persons Undermining Democratic Processes or Institutions in Belarus

June 6, 2008

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency and related measures blocking the property of certain persons undermining democratic processes or institutions in Belarus are to continue in effect beyond June 16, 2008.

The actions and policies of certain members of the Government of Belarus and other persons pose a continuing unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. These actions include undermining democratic processes or institutions; committing human rights abuses related to political repression, including detentions and disappearances; and engaging in public corruption, including by diverting or misusing Belarusian public assets or by misusing public authority. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency and related measures blocking the property of certain persons undermining democratic processes or institutions in Belarus.

George W. Bush

The White House,
June 6, 2008.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

May 31

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Greenville, SC, where, upon arrival in the evening, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Andrew Barnhill.

Later in the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

June 2

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he chaired a National Security Council meeting on Iraq, in which he was briefed by Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq, via video teleconference.

The President announced his intention to nominate Kenneth L. Peel to be U.S. Director of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

The President announced his intention to nominate Gregory G. Garre to be Solicitor General at the Department of Justice and designate him as Acting Solicitor General at the Department of Justice.

June 3

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Roosevelt Room, the President met with Iraqi Shi'a and Sunni tribal leaders.

June 4

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

During the day, the President met with Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates to dis-

cuss personnel changes at the Department of the Air Force.

June 5

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Rose Garden, he participated in a photo opportunity with the 2007 Major League Soccer Cup champion Houston Dynamo.

The President announced his intention to nominate James Franklin Jeffrey to be Ambassador to Turkey.

The President announced his intention to nominate the following individuals to be members of the National Council on Disability: Marylyn Andrea Howe; Heather McCallum; Lonnie C. Moore; and Christina Alvarado Shanahan.

The President announced his intention to nominate the following individuals to be members of the Board of Directors of the African Development Foundation: John O. Agwunobi; Julius E. Coles; Morgan W. Davis; and John W. Leslie.

The President announced his intention to appoint Wayne B. Paugh as Coordinator for International Intellectual Property Enforcement at the Department of Commerce.

The President announced that he has named Thomas P. Bossert as Deputy Assistant to the President for Homeland Security.

The President announced that he has named Pete Patterson as Associate Counsel to the President.

June 6

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. He then had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt of Sweden to wish him a happy National Day of Sweden and thank him for hosting the first International Compact with Iraq Annual Review Conference in Stockholm. Later, he participated in separate interviews with POP TV of Slovenia, Rai TV of Italy, and France 3 TV.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Camp David, MD.

**Nominations
Submitted to the Senate**

The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

Submitted June 3

James Culbertson,
of North Carolina, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Alan W. Eastham, Jr.,
of Arkansas, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of the Congo.

Cheryl Feldman Halpern,
of New Jersey, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting for a term expiring January 31, 2014 (reappointment).

Dennis Michael Klein,
of Kentucky, to be U.S. Marshal for the Eastern District of Kentucky for the term of 4 years, vice John Schickel, resigned.

Kenneth L. Peel,
of Maryland, to be U.S. Director of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, vice Mark Sullivan, resigned.

David H. Pryor,
of Arkansas, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting for a term expiring January 31, 2014 (reappointment).

Bruce M. Ramer,
of California, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting for a term expiring January 31, 2012, vice Warren Bell.

Elizabeth Sembler,
of Florida, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting for a term expiring January 31, 2014, vice Claudia Puig, term expired.

Loretta Cheryl Sutliff,
of Nevada, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting for a term expiring January 31, 2012, vice Frank Henry Cruz, term expired.

W. Stuart Symington,
of Missouri, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Rwanda.

Submitted June 4

William B. Carr, Jr.,
of Pennsylvania, to be a member of the U.S. Sentencing Commission for a term expiring October 31, 2011, vice John R. Steer.

Withdrawn June 4

John R. Steer,
of Virginia, to be a member of the U.S. Sentencing Commission for a term expiring October 31, 2011 (reappointment), which was sent to the Senate on January 9, 2007.

**Checklist
of White House Press Releases**

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released June 2

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Dana Perino

Released June 3

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Dana Perino

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 2356, H.R. 2517, H.R. 4008, S. 2829, and S.J. Res. 17

Released June 4

Transcript of a press briefing by National Security Adviser Stephen J. Hadley on the President's trip to Europe

Statement by the Press Secretary on U.S. aid following Cyclone Nargis in Burma

Released June 5

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Dana Perino

Transcript of remarks by National Security Adviser Stephen J. Hadley at a luncheon in honor of the U.S. Institute of Peace

Released June 6

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Dana Perino

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 1195

Fact sheet: A Clear Agenda for Overcoming Economic Challenges

**Acts Approved
by the President**

Approved June 3

H.R. 2356 / Public Law 110–239

To amend title 4, United States Code, to encourage the display of the flag of the United States on Father's Day

H.R. 2517 / Public Law 110–240

Protecting Our Children Comes First Act of 2007

H.R. 4008 / Public Law 110–241

Credit and Debit Card Receipt Clarification Act of 2007

S. 2829 / Public Law 110–242

To make technical corrections to section 1244 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008, which provides special immigrant status for certain Iraqis, and for other purposes

S.J. Res. 17 / Public Law 110–243

Directing the United States to initiate international discussions and take necessary steps with other Nations to negotiate an agreement for managing migratory and transboundary fish stocks in the Arctic Ocean

Approved June 6

H.R. 1195 / Public Law 110–244

SAFETEA–LU Technical Corrections Act of 2008